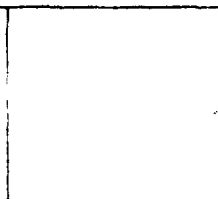


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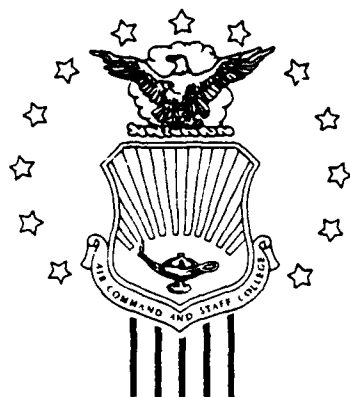
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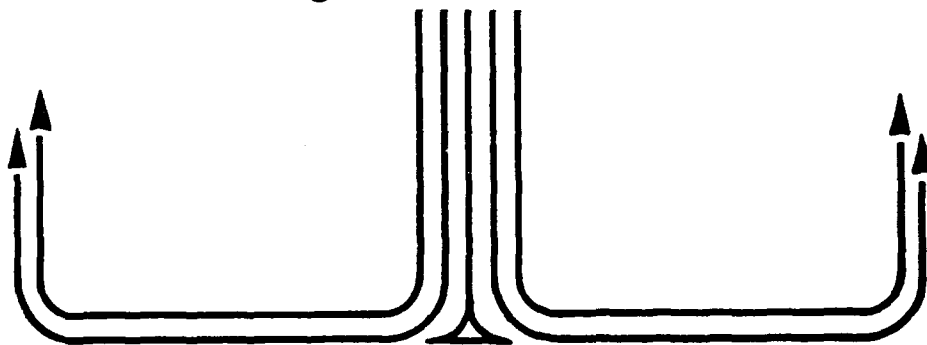
STUDENT REPORT

US OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION

MAJOR JAMES L. CAMPBELL

88-0455

"insights into tomorrow"



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REPORT NUMBER 88-0455

TITLE US OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT STATEMENT "A" Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) 88-0455			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION ACSC/EDC		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Maxwell AFB AL 36112-5542		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.		PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
				WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) US OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Campbell, James L., Major, USAF					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1988 April	
				15. PAGE COUNT 31	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) US policies toward the Persian Gulf region are designed to meet US national objectives. This study examines the development of President Reagan's policy as it relates to achieving US objectives in the Gulf region. To better understand the evolution of this policy the author reviews the policies of Presidents Truman, Nixon, and Carter. Additionally, threats to both past and present US objectives are discussed. The study concludes by presenting some recommendations designed to help the reader better understand what is required of future successful US Persian Gulf policies.					
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL ACSC/EDC Maxwell AFB AL 36112-5542			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (205) 293-2867		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

PREFACE

This paper is intended to enhance the reader's knowledge of US interests and involvement in the Persian Gulf region. The author acknowledges the importance of political, military, social, and economic factors, but he is primarily focused on the political development of US national objectives and policy. The information he presents includes some of the most important facts and concepts necessary for understanding past policy, and for developing sound future US policy toward the Persian Gulf region. This paper evolved from the author's earlier work on US-Saudi Arabian relations. That original work was produced for the National Defense University's National Security Management Course. This paper will be submitted to the National Security Affairs Division, Air Command and Staff College, for consideration as required student reading during the regional studies phase of instruction.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major James L. Campbell is a senior navigator with over 13 years flying experience in the Strategic Air Command. For seven of those years he was directly involved in training new crews in the operation of KC-135A and FB-111A aircraft. His last operational assignment was as the Director of Training, 530th Combat Crew Training Squadron (FB-111A), Plattsburgh AFB, NY. He holds a BA in History from Missouri Western State College and a MA in Human Relations and Management from Webster College. A graduate of Squadron Officers School resident program and the Marine Command and Staff College, he subsequently completed the National Defense University's National Security Management Course as an "Outstanding Graduate." Upon completion of the Air Command and Staff College resident program, Major Campbell is assigned to the college as a faculty instructor.

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REPORT NUMBER 88-0455

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR JAMES L. CAMPBELL, USAF

TITLE US OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION

I. Purpose: To enhance the reader's understanding of the importance of US policy toward the Persian Gulf region, particularly, the moderate Arab states.

II. Problem: Today, the Persian Gulf region is the most active arena of direct US military involvement, yet many professional military officers display a lack of understanding of the critical factors pertaining to US national objectives and policy in the region. The regional studies block of instruction at Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) can and should serve to educate future military leaders about the significance of this strategically vital area. Currently, the required student readings pertaining to the Persian Gulf region at ACSC are minimal and do not include an adequate study of this important region.

III. Data: The specific US national objectives for the Persian Gulf region are restated from official government sources. These objectives include denying the Soviet Union control over the region, insuring the sovereignty of the nonbelligerent Gulf states, and finally, guaranteeing the unimpeded flow of Gulf oil at reasonable prices. The significance of each US regional objective and how they influence past, present, and future US

CONTINUED

policy should be understood by future US policy makers and military leaders. Additionally, a sound understanding of the most significant threats to US interests in the region is required if future plans and policies are to be successful. Currently, these threats include Islamic fundamentalism, inter-Arab politics, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and superpower rivalries. Understanding the root causes and the dangers from each of these threats will help produce better future policies. Previous US administrations attempted to counter similar threats and to achieve US objectives in this region. Presidents Truman, Nixon and Carter each made significant contributions to the evolution of US policy in the Gulf. Current and future US leadership can provide a sound, more effective US policy toward the Persian Gulf region after examining and studying the attempts of their predecessors. The relative success and failure of such policies as Truman's containment, Nixon's twin-pillars, and Carter's Camp David accords will help future leaders develop better policies. Each doctrine or political move was an attempt by an administration to meet the threats of its day and to achieve US objectives. The efforts of previous administrations significantly affect current US objectives and policies in the Persian Gulf region today.

IV. Conclusion: The Reagan Corollary to the Carter Doctrine is the current US policy in the Persian Gulf. Under this policy the administration is attempting to achieve current US national objectives in the region. Military factors involved in securing these objectives include the development of Central Command (CENTCOM), attempts to improve military-to-military relations with all nonbelligerent states of the region, and expanded US naval presence in the Persian Gulf. These are positive steps the Reagan administration has taken, but future national policies must move forward to finally attain US objectives in this area.

V. Recommendations: Future US policy in the Persian Gulf region must better support US national objectives. For the near future, those objectives are not likely to change significantly from curbing Soviet expansion, providing for the legitimate needs of friendly nonbelligerent Arab states, and guaranteeing access to Gulf oil. US policy must change, and it must be based on a better understanding of both objectives and threats. From this better understanding can develop public support for a more responsive and better balanced future policy capable of attaining US national objectives in this region. Above all, the US must not back down from its leadership role in bringing stability to the Gulf. Active rather than reactive leadership is required of future US Persian Gulf policy.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding of the importance of US policy toward the Persian Gulf region, particularly, the moderate Arab states. Recognizing the importance of all instruments of national power, political, economic and military, this study will be limited primarily to examining the political and military roles. It will begin by defining the three official US regional objectives for the Persian Gulf. Then, the four predominant threats to these specific US objectives will be examined. The danger these threats pose to the well-being of the free world and to the American way of life was underscored by Secretary of State, George P. Shultz in January 1987 when he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "as part of the strategic crossroads of the Middle East, this area must not come under the domination of a power hostile to the United States and its allies" (36:163). This idea is not new. A review of the evolution of US policy since World War II will show that we have consistently believed a destabilized Persian Gulf region would jeopardize US national objectives. After presenting this brief historical review, the study will turn its attention to current US policy toward this region. Finally, some considerations for possible future US regional policies will be presented. These considerations will be based on the reality that US military solutions to eliminate or neutralize the threats and achieve our objectives are severely limited by the political, social, and economic realities of the region. Solutions for the future of US regional objectives rest largely in the hands of US policy makers. But, before these policy makers can consider future US policies toward the Persian Gulf region they must first clearly understand our national objectives in this area.

US NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In January, 1987, Secretary of State, George P. Shultz before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee stated our long-term objectives in the Persian Gulf region were:

. . . denying the Soviet Union either direct control or increased influence over the region or any of its states.

. . . [the sovereignty of] the nonbelligerent gulf states, both in their own right and because of their influence within the gulf and beyond.

. . . seeing that the region's supply of oil to the West continues unimpeded (36:164).

These objectives are the officially proclaimed objectives of the US and have been re-tated by both President Reagan and former Secretary of Defense Weinberger on many occasions. A thorough understanding of the significance of these US objectives is essential for developing and applying an effective Persian Gulf policy.

SIGNIFICANCE OF US OBJECTIVES

US national objectives serve as the basis for all US military, political and economic policies toward the Persian Gulf region and each objective has a significance in a particular area of national policy. The containment of communism and of Soviet Union influence is the overriding political objective of the US. This objective is concerned not only with direct Soviet influence and invasion, but also with Soviet influence through proxy states or movements in the region. Current proxies include the nation of South Yemen, also known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDY), and the communist party of Iran, the Tudeh (12:36). The second objective, preserving the sovereign rights and regional influences of the nonbelligerent gulf states, is another important political objective. Achieving this objective helps the US insure the security and stability of the region, as well as insuring a certain degree of US influence among these states. Finally, achieving and maintaining the unimpeded flow of Persian Gulf oil is the primary economic objective. Not only must the flow continue, but the availability and price must remain reasonable to provide the energy essential to the industrial well-being of the free world. As each year goes by, Western oil dependence increases. In 1986, US oil imports reached their highest level since 1980. The American Petroleum Institute, an oil industry trade group, reported an average of six million barrels a day of crude oil and oil products were imported in 1986, up 22 percent from 1985 (37:3). In that same period, 46 percent of the oil imports of Western Europe, and 60 percent of Japan's came from the Gulf (15:150). Also in 1986, Saudi Arabian oil production rose 47.5 percent (17:3). Clearly, the US must insure friendly control of Gulf oil. Although titled political and economic, each objective influences the others and each has characteristics that transcend any conveniently labeled areas of national policy. Furthermore, these US national objectives are interdependent on each other and each may require the use of military power for protection from powerful threats.

Chapter Two

THE THREATS

The major threats to US national objectives in the Persian Gulf include, Islamic fundamentalism, inter-Arab politics, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and superpower rivalry (4:182). Each threatens US ability to contain Soviet expansion, to stabilize and secure the nonbelligerent gulf states, and to guarantee the unimpeded flow of Persian Gulf oil. Advances by any single threat can have destabilizing effects for the Persian Gulf region, the US, Western Europe and Japan. For these reasons, the reduction and eventual elimination of these threats must be a top priority for US policy makers.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

Ayatollah Khomeini's export of Islamic fundamentalism is recognized as the most active and most volatile threat to regional security in the Persian Gulf. His movement zealously advocates the restoration of spiritual superiority over all aspects of life, and the establishment of a new Islamic Order. The West is seen as the great Satan, the spiritual threat to the new order (10:120). This threat is exported in two basic forms; the Iran-Iraq war, and terrorism. Unresolved, Islamic fundamentalism will continue to dominate the Persian Gulf scene. To successfully handle this threat, US policy makers must first understand the Arab view of Islamic fundamentalism.

The Arab Perspective

The nonbelligerent Arab states' perspective of Islamic fundamentalism is significantly different from that of the West. The Iran-Iraq war is one export of this fundamentalism that exemplifies this difference in perspective. While Americans generally see this war as a religious conflict between two sects of Moslem Arabs, the nonbelligerent Arab states view it more as a clash between both peoples and ideologies. For these Arabs it is a threat to their entire social, economic, and political way of life. In essence, to them the Iran-Iraq war is "Sunni/Arab vs. Shiite/Persian" (1:97). On one hand they contrast the zeal and aggression of the Shiite Moslems with the cooperation and moderation of the Sunni, an idea the US somewhat understands. But on the other hand, the Gulf Arabs are quick to point to historical data revealing Persian domination of the region and

subjugation of the Arabian tribes. The idea that this war is Persian vs. Arab brings an additional element into US policy formulation. Whether it is critical to a solution is debatable, however this is the perception of Persian Gulf moderates and therefore it must be considered by US policy makers. With this perception in mind, the US can better understand the nature and impact of the war itself.

Iran-Iraq War

Today, the Iran-Iraq war has defined patterns of behavior and support. Operationally, roughly twice a year Khomeini directs "great offensives" against Iraq. These make minor gains, followed by Iraqi containment and then stalemate (8:241). The operations gain little, and casualties are generally very heavy. More recently, Iranian and Iraqi attacks on gulf shipping threaten the economic stability of the region. Logistically, the war continues because each side has developed well defined sources of support. At the start of the war, most moderate Gulf states were hesitant to get involved. They feared the war would get out of hand and spread into the peninsula. These same Arab states saw danger in either an Iranian or Iraqi victory. Both Iran and Iraq had desired to dominate the gulf. Early Iranian territorial gains and aggression against neutral Kuwait soon shifted support to Iraq. Kuwait began providing economic aid to Iraq soon after Iran threatened to occupy Kuwaiti territory. Included in this economic aid was financial assistance and help in getting Iraqi oil to market (27:3). On October 9, 1980, the Iraqi oil minister Tayih Abd al-Karim told the Saudis how desperately Iraq needed their help to survive. Two days later, King Hussein of Jordan, a long time supporter of Iraqi war efforts, pleaded Iraq's case to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. As a result of these actions and early Iranian successes, a "de facto axis" now exists between Riyadh and Baghdad (32:42). Currently, Iraq transports most of its oil, nearly two million barrels per day via pipelines to Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, on the Red Sea (17:3). Iraq is now supported by all members of the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC); these include Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) plus Jordan and Egypt. Iran gets most of its support from Syria and Libya, the other radical Arabs (1:85). With military operations stalemated and each side adequately supported, prospects for eliminating this threat are not good. But this war is only one of Khomeini's exports of Islamic fundamentalism; terrorism is the other.

Terrorism

American media often presents terrorism as being Arab inspired, Arab supported and mostly meaningless. This is not a clear picture of modern day terrorism. Former Secretary of Defense, Caspar W. Weinberger stated in his Annual Report To

Congress, FY 88, "the Soviet Union, Libya, Iran, and Syria use terrorism as a means to further their foreign policy objectives" (42:24). Two important facts are evident in this quote. First, not all the countries using terrorism are Arab, and second, they use it for a very special purpose, political gain. The important point to understand is that none of the nonbelligerent Arab states of the gulf region were included in the quote.

The US must understand that no other region in the the world feels the sting of terrorism as keenly as US friends in the gulf. Kuwait in particular, is the victim of frequent terrorist bombings. The most recent example of terrorism against Kuwait occurred in October 1987, when the Pan Am building was destroyed. While terrorist bombings on US soil continue to be a threat, and while terrorist activities in Europe are significant, their primary targets are the nonbelligerent states of the gulf region. This is the region where Khomeini's radical Islamic sponsored terrorism hopes to force the legitimate governments to abandon their support of Iraq and thereby strengthen his revolution. Gargantuan in political and military terms, this radical and violent Islamic fundamentalism is only one of several threats to US national interests in the Persian Gulf region.

INTER-ARAB POLITICS

Inter-Arab politics and rivalries continue to polarize and divide the Arab world. In studying these rivalries we must remember that 50 years ago almost all of this region was wasteland, inhabited by fiercely independent nomadic tribesmen. In those days, British protectorates dominated the area and provided the main semblance of legitimate government. After World War II, oil quickly transformed the region from an unorganized flock of tribes into a group of independent and wealthy nations. Their economic growth has been like no other in history. But, with this new found wealth came many problems. Because not all Arab nations grew equally, and not all Arab people viewed this progress the same, inter-Arab rivalries and revolutionary Islamic factions soon developed.

Today in the Persian Gulf region we find the area roughly divided into two camps. On one side are the more radical nations desiring change and committed to an overthrow of the status quo. The radicals include Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, the PDRY and Iran. On the other side are the moderate Arab states which include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, the UAE, and Jordan. It is important to know that all of the moderates except Jordan are members of the six nation GCC.

The GCC was founded in 1981 as an economic organization. Since that time it has grown in scope. By 1983 the GCC was

conducting operation "Peninsula Shield," a joint military exercise in western Abu Dhabi, UAE. This exercise was designed to provide a unified gulf rapid deployment force capable of defending their homelands (34:84). This military aspect of the GCC was prompted by both the Iran-Iraq war and by acts of terrorism. In July of 1987 the GCC issued a communiqué stating the council would consider,

...any violation of any part of the territories of the member countries or any threat to the security of one of them an attack on all of them. And that all the member countries would rise with all their power to confront this violation. The council strongly condemns the acts of terrorism and sabotage to which Kuwait has been exposed and it affirms that it will stand by the side of Kuwait and support the measures that it takes to preserve its security and stability and ensure its commercial and economic interests (18:1).

Any portrayal of the inter-Arab politics must be careful not to paint a simple, easy to follow picture. While the GCC appears to be a consolidated force, and clear lines are drawn between radicals and moderates, the regional situation is far from being that simple. As one example, Saudi Arabia, the leader of the moderate states and the dominant, most powerful force within the GCC was the only member of that organization not to break relations with the radical Syrian government of Assad over his policies toward Lebanon and the Persian Gulf. In fact, Saudi Arabia continues to provide financial support to the Syrian government (25:77).

Support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is another area where Arab politics play an important role. Here, Arabic support crosses virtually every line and draws support from every faction of the Arabic world. The varying amounts of PLO support and the radical vs. moderate nature of various solutions to this problem often serve to aggravate the politics of the Arabs in the Persian Gulf region. Until the PLO problem is solved, it will remain the principal ingredient in the threats of both inter-Arab politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The third major threat to our strategic objectives in the Persian Gulf region is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Politically, the Palestine question is at the heart of this conflict. Since 1948 and the creation of the state of Israel, the misplaced Arab inhabitants of that Mediterranean region have been trying to reclaim their home, their Palestine. The gulf states, led by

Saudi Arabia have been long-standing supporters of the Palestinian people in their quest for a free independent state (2:33). At the same time, the US has remained unfaltering in support for the nation of Israel. The US understands the Israeli fears of Arab invasion and therefore sees it as their duty to protect this small haven for democracy. At the same time, the US has certain sympathy toward any group of people without a nation, fighting for what they feel is rightly theirs. Understandably, the US adopted the role of peacemaker in an attempt to end the dispute. Numerous US attempts over the past 39 years have failed to resolve this problem. Some progress was made during the Carter administration when Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords. A degree of Arab participation was included, but the accords stopped far short of establishing a free and independent Palestine. Since the Camp David accords made only limited provisions for the Palestinians, nearly all of the Arab world rejected them (13:25). However, the moderate Arab states still believe the US must be involved in any permanent solution. They believe the US is the only country with adequate economic and political influence in Israel to help facilitate a settlement (9:118). It must be remembered that this political element is only one side of the Arab-Israeli conflict; the other is military. Israel is much stronger than perhaps any, if not all Arab states. Saudis know the flight time from Israel to Riyadh, their capital and the geographic and political center of the GCC, is less than 30 minutes. They also know their 67,500 men will never be a match for the 149,000 of Israel (23:3). Based on these facts, the best they can hope for is a defensive capability to limit possible Israeli violations of their territory without starting an all-out war (34:72). The Arab preoccupation with these political and military threats posed by Israel greatly hinders US strategic objectives in the gulf region. With the US seen as the strongest supporter of Israel, any attempt by the US to bring stability to the region, or to contain Soviet expansion is viewed with skepticism by the Arab community. America's image as benefactor to Israel is possibly the largest single barrier to solving the Arab-Israel conflict (34:89). Additionally, Soviet moves may exacerbate any US attempt to achieve stability and peace.

SUPERPOWER RIVALRY

Superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union is the fourth threat to gaining US national objectives in the Persian Gulf region. While Islamic fundamentalism, inter-Arab politics, and the Arab-Israel conflict all directly hinder US ability to achieve objectives, influential gains by the Soviet Union represent the most serious threat. To understand the Soviet motives, the US should know that Russian interests in this region are not new.

Long before oil the Soviets desired to have control over Arabia, not only for warm ports, but because the area serves as a land bridge between them and Africa. Before 1917, the Tsar sent ships to the Persian Gulf and tried unsuccessfully to form an anti-British alliance with King Ibn Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia (6:5). Immediately after World War II, the Soviet Union refused for some time to withdraw its troops from the Gulf region. They finally did leave, but only after the US and Great Britain made diplomatic demands (10:43). Since the 1950s, Moscow has continued to push their influence into the Gulf.

Soviet ideology demands revolutionary action. In 1979, Yuri Andropov said, "Marxism-Leninism is the textbook for achieving socialist revolution and the building of a new society throughout the world" (16:16). Modern Soviet determination to build this new society has created Marxist regimes in Ethiopia and South Yemen, and produced the invasion of Afghanistan (31:45). Their determination has also provided the Soviet Navy with access to ports in Aden, Dahlak Island, and Socotra (40:54). In Kuwait they challenge the US presence with an embassy and staff of over 140 under the guidance of Ambassador Ernest N. Zverev (30:2). In the past two years Oman and the United Arab Emirates, both members of the moderate GCC, have established full diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union (24:30). South Yemen (PDRY) and the Soviets have long been joined in a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (31:43). In short, each of these areas offered the Soviets new opportunities to expand and solidify their influence.

In the future the Soviets will continue to support revolutionary movements, to strengthen pro-Soviet governments, and to increase their military presence in attempts to establish greater control (31:38). Their encirclement of the heart of Arab moderation, Saudi Arabia, is almost complete, and the Soviet threat remains strong. The Soviets will continue to oppose any attempt by the US to achieve its strategic objectives of halting communism and securing the stability of the nonbelligerent Gulf states. The third US regional objective, a guaranteed flow of Gulf oil, is also jeopardized by Soviet aggression (31:39). Their expansion into this region could lead to Soviet control of the crucial flow of Gulf oil. This control, if misused, could cut the strategic "jugular vein" of the industrialized Western world and throw it into economic turmoil and political ruin (2:62). Future US foreign policy must reverse this trend of Soviet expansion if US national objectives are to be achieved. Before new policies can be effective, US policy makers must first review and understand the shortcomings of past policies. Without this review, future US policies will quite possibly repeat the mistakes of previous plans.

Chapter Three

EVOLUTION OF US POLICY

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

For the past 40 years the containment of Soviet military aggression, as defined by the Truman Doctrine, has been the basis for all US foreign policies (3:1). In 1946, President Truman understood the importance of the Persian Gulf region and the need for security assistance and Soviet containment when he said:

The area contains vast natural resources. It lies across the most convenient land, air, and water communications. It is consequently an area of great economic and strategic importance, the nations of which are not strong enough individually or collectively to withstand powerful aggression (35:113).

By 1947, the British were reducing their presence in the Persian Gulf region. World War II had taken its toll on the British economy, and they were desperate to reduce the costs of maintaining peace in their empire. They expected the US, the only atomic superpower, to help maintain a balance of power between the West and the Soviet Union. As British forces diminished, US concern and influence increased. During this period, US commitments in Iran, Turkey, and Greece proved vital in preventing Stalin from expanding Soviet influence into these regions (26:11). Containment became the cornerstone of US foreign policy. In future years, nearly every president would alter this basic concept to better suit his time and his perceptions. Presidents Nixon, Carter, and Reagan developed the most significant changes for achieving US objectives in the Persian Gulf region.

THE NIXON DOCTRINE

The Nixon Doctrine was implemented in 1972, and proclaimed that regional states should have the primary role in providing for their own defense. In the Persian Gulf region this doctrine lead to the "twin pillar" policy. Iran and Saudi Arabia would constitute the pillars upon which rested both the security of

the Gulf region and American national interests (5:13). This policy would last for the remainder of the Nixon administration and through most of the Carter years.

The demise of the Nixon Doctrine occurred in 1979 with the fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When the Shah fell, it became evident the stronger pillar was gone. Even though the US called Iran and Saudi Arabia twins, they were not treated equally. In the years prior to the Shah's fall the US built his military into a mighty Persian force. Saudi Arabia on the other hand, received mostly economic and technical aid to further develop its oil resources. Some military aid in the form of F-15 sales had occurred, but these were not on the scale as US sales to Iran. Neither US economic aid nor limited military aid prepared Saudi Arabia for the new role it was about to receive. Additionally, during this same period the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made it clear that containment of Soviet expansion was beyond the capability of regional states. The US still wanted regional powers to provide much of their own defense, but the "twin pillar" policy had failed, and it was time for a major modification.

THE CARTER DOCTRINE

In late 1979, the Carter Doctrine became America's official policy. This doctrine responded to the external threats of the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Through it, President Carter committed the US to the military defense of the Gulf from external threats (11:9). With the unexpected loss of America's strongest regional ally, plus rapid advances by the Soviets, it became imperative for the US to establish a new source of regional strength. Fortunately, the US had devoted some attention to the improvement of relations with Saudi Arabia. Back in 1978, the US had passed a Saudi test of confidence by selling them F-15 fighters for air defense. Later, the US passed a second test with the sale of five Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft (9:61,65). These early commitments by the US provide the basis for US credibility in the region today. Granted, the cancellation of subsequent sales and the seemingly endless debates in Congress have caused regional powers to question US resolve, but the US capability to help and to provide essential security assistance is a fact of life in the Gulf today. The Carter Doctrine dealt specifically with both the Islamic fundamentalist and the Soviet threats, but perhaps that administration's greatest success was in working towards a settlement of the Egyptian-Israeli and Arab-Israeli conflicts.

THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS

The Camp David accords were probably the single greatest achievement of the Carter administration. The accords included two separate documents, each designed for a specific purpose. The first accord was a plan to end Egyptian-Israeli hostilities. This accord was successful, and in March of 1979 an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed. For the first time, the modern state of Israel was formally recognized as a legitimate state by a major Arab nation. The second accord attempted to provide a framework for determining the future of Gaza and the West Bank, thereby resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict (35:117). These two accords created mixed blessings for the US. On one hand, they gained political recognition for an important ally Israel, while at the same time defusing a potentially explosive regional conflict. They also showed the Arab world the importance US leadership placed on their problems. An American president was directly involved, and that carries weight among the political elite in this region. On the other hand, the first accord alienated Egypt from most of the Arab states. Egypt had signed a pact with Israel, the enemy of the Arabs. Additionally, the second accord, the one concerning the Palestinians, was seen as totally inadequate by nearly all Arabs. They felt the US was not doing all that it should to solve the problem. Still, even with these mixed reviews, the Camp David accords proved very important in maintaining US influence in this region. Today many Persian Gulf states have reestablished full diplomatic relations with Egypt, and US participation is widely viewed as an essential element for achieving a permanent Arab-Israeli solution (22:51). US efforts to reduce regional tensions have not stopped. Under the Reagan administration, the search for a new US policy continues.

Chapter Four

CURRENT US POLICY

THE REAGAN COROLLARY

In 1980, President Reagan enunciated a corollary to the Carter Doctrine to protect our friendly Gulf states from radical "internal" threats. President Reagan saw the Iranian Revolution with its Shiite fundamentalism, as a strong internal threat to the nonbelligerent Persian Gulf states. He also recognized Bahrain's Shiite majority, and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait's sizable Shiite populations as potential threats to regional security and stability. For these reasons he pledged US assistance. More specifically, he pledged that the US would not permit Saudi Arabia to become another Iran (11:9). To enforce his corollary, President Reagan saw the need for a US military force that could guarantee US national objectives in the Persian Gulf region against all threats. President Carter had created the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), but in 1980 it was little more than a paper framework without strength (26:17). President Reagan wanted a more militarily secure US presence. To accomplish this, he established the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), attempted to improve military-to-military relations with the nonbelligerent states, and increased US Naval strength in the region (24:32).

United States Central Command (CENTCOM)

CENTCOM is now serving in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. It is composed of all four services, with heavy emphasis on naval prepositioning and airlift (21:35). CENTCOM assets include one Marine Amphibious Force, three army divisions and seven tactical fighter wings (7:46). With few bases open in the region to US forces, CENTCOM relies on a system of seaborne prepositioning. Eighteen Near Term Prepositioned Ships (NTPS) are stationed at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. These ships contain personnel, equipment and supplies to support US military operations in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Additionally, some basing rights now exist. By classified agreement with Oman, if a crisis occurs CENTCOM has permission to use some air and naval facilities in that country (11:23). Being able to rapidly deploy a fighting force, is only one of the ways the Reagan Administration hopes to achieve US national objectives in the region.

Military-To-Military Relations

Another way the present administration is attempting to counter threats to US objectives is by improving military-to-military relationships with the nonbelligerent Persian Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia. CENTCOM is one aspect of this military-to-military relationship, but military sales play the pivotal role. Richard W. Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs explained the importance of understanding foreign military sales to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs when he said,

There is not enough understanding of the strategic importance of such [foreign military] sales to the US. Our close military ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, for example, have been a key factor in guaranteeing that our friends have the means to protect their own security, containing threats posed by the Iran-Iraq war and Iranian extremism, guarding against Soviet incursions and cooperating with the US in ensuring free international access to oil supplies (28:121).

Foreign military sales are important, but they include more than hardware. Also included in military sales are technical assistance programs which are essential for proper military operations. As mentioned earlier, the US sales of F-15 fighters and E-3 AWACS aircraft established the basis for our special relationship with Saudi Arabia. These sales not only strengthened Saudi Arabian defenses, but more importantly they increased US influence and prestige among the nonbelligerent states. Still, recent US delays have sometimes made the US look like a questionable ally. By 1985, the Iran-Iraq war had escalated and the Saudis did not have enough F-15s to maintain a 24 hour airborne surveillance. When they asked to purchase 40 to 48 more F-15s, the US became noncommittal. Finally, in September the Saudis gave up on the US and announced plans to buy 48 Tornado aircraft from the British-German-Italian Panavia consortium. Most of these aircraft have been delivered (34:68). In March of 1987, things started looking up. The administration announced plans to sell over one billion dollars worth of military hardware to Saudi Arabia. Included in the purchase are electronic jamming pods for F-15 and F-5 aircraft, 15 Bell Combat Scout helicopters with TOW missiles, 200 armored personnel carriers, radar, and surface-to-air missiles (38:2). Prospects for these sales are good. During this same period the US began constructing "Peace Shield", a very sophisticated Saudi Arabian air defense system. When completed in 1992, the system will provide air defense coverage not only for Saudi Arabia, but for the entire GCC. Except for the systems of the US, USSR, and NATO, this system will be the most modern air defense system in the world (34:67). These are some examples of positive

military-to-military relations, but many attempts have not done so well. Recently, faced with almost certain congressional defeat, the administration withdrew its plan to sell 1600 Maverick air-to-ground missiles to Saudi Arabia (14:40). Despite this vacillating support, the Saudis and most of the moderate GCC states continue to turn first to the US for help. Improving military-to-military relations and establishing CENICOM are only two ways the Reagan Administration is trying to guarantee US national objectives in this region.

US Naval Presence

Establishing and maintaining a strong US naval presence is another way President Reagan plans to secure US objectives in the Persian Gulf region. Ten years ago only three US destroyers were stationed in the Gulf region. Today, over 23 US Navy ships travel those same waters. Among them are two aircraft carrier battle groups with over 100 combat aircraft, and as many as 5 nuclear powered submarines (21:49). This US naval presence has increased in both size and scope of operations to meet the ever increasing risks.

The risks to US naval operations increased substantially in February 1987, when Chinese made Silkworm surface-to-surface missiles were successfully test fired by the Iranians from Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz, and from the Faw Peninsula, at the northern end of the Persian Gulf (20:38). Following the tests, Iran started operational deployment of the missiles. They did this after the US stated that deployment would be regarded as a "hostile act" (33:1). During this time Kuwait recognized these missiles constituted an unacceptable threat to its tanker fleet. Seeking protection, the Kuwaiti government turned to both superpowers and requested assistance. Washington initially vacillated while Moscow quickly leased Kuwait three Soviet tankers with Soviet Navy escorts. Finally, in March of 1987, the Reagan Administration reflagged eleven Kuwaiti tankers and provided US Navy escort to insure the unimpeded flow of oil from the Gulf (20:39). Two months later, on May 17, US commitment to this endeavor was severely tested when the USS Stark was mistakenly hit by two Iraqi fired missiles (41:58). Thirty-seven sailors died, and US commitment was questioned at home and abroad. To America's credit, US resolve did not fade. Operational adjustments were made, but US determination to achieve national objectives remained steadfast. Current US reflagging and escort operations are absolutely critical to the economies of the nonbelligerent Gulf states and to the continued flow of their oil to the West.

US Naval presence, improved military-to-military relations, and the deployment of CENICOM are all critical elements of the Reagan Corollary to the Carter Doctrine. Under this policy some Soviet gains have slipped. Iraq, once firmly in the Soviet

sphere, reestablished formal relations with the US in late 1984 (29:21). As a superpower, the US is trying hard to meet the challenges, to curb Soviet expansionism, to protect the sovereignty of the nonbelligerent Persian Gulf States, and to guarantee the unobstructed flow of Gulf oil. But if the threats are to be removed, and the objectives achieved, future US policy will have to improve.

Chapter Five

FUTURE US POLICY

Future US policy toward the Persian Gulf region must support US national objectives in the region. Future US regional objectives will continue to center around containment and reduction of Soviet expansionism, commitment to the sovereignty of the nonbelligerent Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the other GCC members, and guaranteeing the unimpeded flow of Gulf oil. In the future, the Soviet Union will continue to seek its primary objective of expanding military and political influence while simultaneously limiting that of the US (19:41). The Islamic fundamentalists will continue to try to dominate the Gulf region using the tools of violence, war and terrorism. It is totally unacceptable for the US and the free world to allow either the Soviets or the Islamic fundamentalists to gain their objectives. An effective US policy toward this region is the key to insuring US objectives are achieved. For future US policy to be successful, it must be rooted in a better understanding of the importance and the concerns of the region by the American population. From this better understanding can develop public support for a future policy capable of providing timely and appropriate response to the needs of the sovereign nonbelligerent Gulf states. Finally, for any future policy to be successful it must place the US in an active leadership role, providing equitable solutions to regional conflicts.

UNDERSTANDING

Thorough US public understanding of the importance of the Persian Gulf region is essential for the success of future US policy toward the region. This need for popular understanding and support was clearly expressed by former Secretary of Defense Weinberger when he said, "increased security that reduces risk requires costs, and increased costs require popular support and a determined commitment to pay freedom's price" (39 :17). Once the American people understand the importance of this region, the US can employ consistent policies responsive to the legitimate needs of the nonbelligerent Persian Gulf states. These policies will be in sharp contrast to the vacillating present day US policies. No area more clearly shows US vacillation than the on-again, off-again military sales to Saudi Arabia. Such US inconsistency will only stop after the US

public understands the strategic value of this area. Possibly the single most important point the US public should understand is that dependence on the flow of Gulf oil is a two-way street. The Western nations need the oil to fuel their industrial societies. At the same time, the economic and political security of the moderate Arab states rests in their oil revenues. If the industrial West is not fueled or if the moderate Gulf states collapse, the Soviet Union, Iran, or any other belligerent state could seriously jeopardize US national objectives and regional security.

RESPONSIVENESS

Security is the overriding need of each of the moderate Arab states, and US responsiveness to this need is critical to achieving US objectives in the region. In examining Gulf security, the US must remember that not long ago the entire Arabian Peninsula was made up of bands of nomadic tribes occupying ill-defined territories. They gave loyalty to no nation state, and functioned politically on a rudimentary tribal basis (29:15). Nationalism and political unification is a process that continues in many Gulf states. Threats previously examined can disrupt this nation building process and destroy the sovereignty and security of the important pro-Western Arab Gulf states.

Moderate Arab states are attempting to eliminate threats to their security. Since the oil embargo of 1973, Saudi Arabia has emerged as the recognized political and economic leader of the moderate Arab states. The Saudis have been very responsive to their needs and the needs of their moderate neighbors. They were instrumental in the development of the GCC. Saudi Arabia provided Oman essential help in defeating the Soviet and PDRY backed Dhofar rebellion. It helped North Yemen put down a radical Nasserite takeover attempt, and in 1983 they pressured the PDRY into peace with Oman (34:67). However, Saudi Arabia and the GCC is no military match for the more radical Arab states such as Iraq, Iran and Syria. Their small populations will never allow them to be an equal to the forces of Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq or Iran. Saudi Arabia and other GCC members are trying to offset these inequalities by building up their military forces (2:824). No matter how capable the combined forces of the GCC may become, they can never defeat their stronger neighbors. The best they can hope for is to delay aggression until help arrives from the US.

Future US policy must be responsive to US regional objectives and to the legitimate needs of the nonbelligerent Arab states. Only when asked to intervene, or when US regional objectives are in danger should the US get involved. At that time a US response must be large enough to accomplish the

objective, yet small enough not to invite escalation. Any US response should be combined with the cooperation and assistance of Arab friends. Above all, US military responses must get to the conflict before the battle is lost. US basing on Saudi or other GCC soil would greatly facilitate a timely US response, but it would alienate those countries from the Arab world. The nonbelligerent Gulf states understandably see foreign basing as an infringement on their sovereignty, and they believe such basing would reduce their pro-Western influence over the Arab world. For these reasons the US should not force basing rights that could make these nations appear as US "puppet" states. US responsiveness is not bullshhness, rather it is being there when needed with military, economic, and political assistance. In the future, reactionary US policies will not suffice and the US must accept a more active leadership role.

ACTIVE LEADERSHIP

Regional confrontations require the US to take this more active leadership role in the Persian Gulf area to achieve US regional objectives. Many threats must be considered by future US policy makers. The Iran-Iraq war and the Arab-Israeli conflict will continue to create the greatest political, economic and military challenges for the US in the near future.

With the Iran-Iraq war, the time has come for the US to demand Iran take responsibility for its actions. No longer should the US allow other nations of the world to accept this threat as a regional nuisance. All forums of international opinion and law should be employed to reveal the terrorist acts and aggressions of this young government. Any nation providing support should be quickly and openly denounced by the US and its allies. Politically, the US should counter these diplomatic moves with an offer to Iran of full recognition in repayment for civilized behavior. If Iran should accept this offer, the US must be prepared to help guarantee the sovereignty and security of Iran from foreign aggression. The Soviet Union or any other state that might attempt to take advantage of Iran should be warned that the US will not allow Iran to fall under foreign domination. Economically, if Iran does not start acting with more restraint, the US should help nations currently purchasing Iranian oil to find alternative sources of energy. In the end Iran must be made more accountable for its actions.

The US should also give attention to Iraq and its actions during and after any resolution of conflict. Iraq, already in favor of UN peace proposals, should be expected to act with restraint once the war ends. In return for greater US cooperation and assistance, Iraq must accept and recognize the sovereignty of Iran and the surrounding Arab states. The US cannot end this war alone. It will take US public support,

combined with international condemnation and unified actions to achieve peace. An end to this war is only one area where US active leadership is essential. Another area demanding active US leadership is the Arab-Israeli conflict.

US and moderate Arab views on the dangers of communism and radical Islamic fundamentalism are very similar, but this similarity of views ends at the Arab-Israeli conflict. When confronted by Zionism, the moderate Arabs see the US as a mixed blessing. On the positive side, these Arabs see the US as the only power capable of applying sufficient pressure to control the Israeli threat. But, because of the close US relationship with Israel, these moderates also see the US as the major supporter of the threat. Additionally, many Arabs view any nation that aligns itself with the supporter of Israel with suspicion. For these reasons, the GCC governments fear their cooperation with the US could be interpreted by more radical Arabs as cooperation with Israel (6:195). Fears such as these point to the need for the US to adopt a new, more evenhanded policy toward this conflict.

The US should stop seeing the Arab-Israeli conflict as a zero-sum game in which one side wins, and one side loses. Israel certainly has the right to exist and the right to protect its land and people. But, at the same time the problems of the displaced Palestine people are also real. They are a people without a nation, but they do exist and they have considerable support. It is time for the US to look for ways to let both sides win. Any solution must be a compromise, and Israel may have to give up some limited territory or political influence. At the same time, Palestinian gains can never be allowed to jeopardize Israeli security. Any solution to this Palestine problem, the primary ingredient of the Arab-Israeli conflict, will not come without US resolve and leadership. The US is the only power with adequate leverage over Israel to force them to consider such a solution. To achieve peace, the US must be prepared to exert sufficient pressure on all parties to get them to set aside destructive parochial desires. In the end, the US must never allow aggression by any state against what might now be a geographically weaker Israel. Only such a US guarantee, backed by United Nations resolutions and other nations of the free world can bring total peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS

The Islamic fundamentalist movement, inter-Arab politics, Arab-Israeli conflict, and superpower rivalries will all play a major role in determining how the US secures national objectives in the Persian Gulf region. US leaders must understand US interdependence with the moderate Gulf states as it applies to securing common objectives; security for the nonbelligerent Gulf states, the guaranteed flow of oil and the halting of communism. US leaders must also understand they can have more influence over Saudi Arabian and GCC development in the 1990s than any other nation. US policy makers must know how US actions or inactions will influence Gulf security in the future. America must respect the right of the nonbelligerent Arab states to make their own choices. The US must not appear bullish or overbearing. At the same time, the US should increase the size and capability of forces in the Gulf region to meet the growing challenge of radical Islamic fundamentalism. US leaders also need to have a better, more impartial understanding of the threat Israel poses to this region. US involvement in finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be intensified. A resolution to the Iran-Iraq war must also be achieved. Without this resolution, the objective of guaranteed oil flow will remain in jeopardy. Lastly, US leaders need to be ever watchful of the Soviet threat. Any time a group rises up to create terror and revolution, the US must be ready to answer the call. If the US is not ready to come to the aid of the moderate nonbelligerent Persian Gulf states, then the containment of communism, the political well-being of the Arab world, and the economies of the oil hungry West could all fail. US foreign policy must be steadfastly committed to their sovereignty, it must respond to their needs, and it must be ready to meet any challenge. A US failure to meet these challenges could cause severe economic and political disruptions to the American way of life and to the stability of the entire Western world.

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